## CHAPTER 49 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

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## 4900 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- This chapter shall apply to applicants for and holders of a license to practice as a physician assistant and to physicians supervising physician assistants.
- Chapters 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules), 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures), and 46 (Medicine) of this title shall supplement this chapter.
- 4900.3 Notwithstanding anything in chapter 40 to the contrary, the Board shall only accept applications for licensure by one of the following means:
  - (a) Examination;
  - (b) Reciprocity;
  - (c) Renewal of an active license;
  - (d) Reactivation of an inactive license; or
  - (e) Reinstatement of an expired, suspended, or revoked license.
- An applicant for a license to practice as a physician assistant shall submit with a completed application three (3) letters of reference from licensed physician assistants or licensed physicians who have personal knowledge of the applicant's abilities and qualifications to practice as a physician assistant.

AUTHORITY: Unless otherwise noted, the authority for this chapter is §302(14) of the District of Columbia Health Occupations Revision Act of 1985, D.C. Law 6-99, D.C. Code §2-3303.2(14) (1988 Repl. Vol.), 33 DCR 729, 732 (February 7, 1986), and Mayor's Order 86-110, 33 DCR 5220 (August 22, 1986).

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263 (December 8, 1989); as amended by Final Rulemaking

published at 37 DCR 2747, 2750 (May 4, 1990).

## 4901 TERM OF LICENSE

- Subject to §4901.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of December 31 of each even-numbered year.
- 4901.2 If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to \$4006.3 of chapter 40 of this title, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license, or other date established by the Director.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8264 (December 8, 1989).

### 4902 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

An applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has successfully completed an educational program to practice as a physician assistant accredited by the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CA-HEA) of the American Medical Association by submitting to the Board, with a completed application, a certified transcript and an official statement verifying graduation from an educational program.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8264 (December 8, 1989); as amended by Final Rulemaking published at 37 DCR 2747, 2751 (May 4, 1990).

#### 4903 EXAMINATION

- Except as provided in §4903.2, an applicant shall receive a passing score on an examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (the NCCPA examination).
- An applicant shall be exempt from the requirements of §4903.1, if the applicant meets the following requirements:
  - (a) Received a passing score on any examination administered by NCCPA prior to December 8, 1989; and
  - (b) Makes application to the Board within one (1) year of December 8, 1989.
- An applicant who fails the certifying examination three (3) times shall successfully complete for the second time an educational program to practice as a physician assistant accredited by CAHEA in order to be eligible to take the examination a fourth time.
- An applicant who fails the NCCPA examination (administered in any jurisdiction) six (6) times shall not be eligible for licensure in the District by any means.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8264 (December 8, 1989).

## 4904 - 4905 [RESERVED]

## 4906 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- Except as provided in §4906.2, this section shall apply to applicants for the renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license for a term expiring December 31, 1992, and for subsequent terms.
- This section does not apply to applicants for an initial license by examination, or reciprocity, nor does it apply to applicants for the first renewal of a license granted by examination.
- 4906.3 A continuing education credit may be granted only for a program or activity approved by the Board in accordance with §4907.
- An applicant for renewal of a license to practice as a physician assistant shall submit proof pursuant to \$4906.7 of having completed during the two-year (2) period preceding the date the license expires approved continuing medical education as follows:
  - (a) Forty (40) hours of credit in continuing medical education meeting the requirements of Category 1, as specified in §4907.2; and
  - (b) Sixty (60) hours of credit in continuing medical education meeting the requirements of either Category 1 or Category 2, as specified in §4907.2 or §4907.3.
- An applicant for reactivation of an inactive license or reinstatement of a license to practice as a physician assistant shall submit proof pursuant to \$4906.7 of having completed during the two-year (2) period immediately preceding the date of application approved continuing medical education as follows:
  - (a) Forty (40) hours of credit in continuing medical education meeting the requirements of Category 1; and
  - (b) Sixty (60) hours of credit in continuing medical education meeting the requirements of either Category 1 or Category 2.
- A physician assistant who is required to obtain continuing medical education credits pursuant to \$4906.4 or 4906.5 may, in lieu of meeting the requirements of those sections, furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the physician assistant holds a current valid certificate from the NCCPA that entitles the physician assistant (under the by-laws of the NCCPA) to use the designation "Physician Assistant-Certified" or "PA-C."
- 4906.7 An applicant under this section shall furnish proof of having completed required continuing education credits by submitting with the application the following information:
  - (a) The name of the program and its approval number;

- (b) The dates on which the applicant attended the program or performed the activity;
- (c) The hours of credit claimed; and
- (d) Verification by the applicant of completion.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8265 (December 8, 1989).

#### 4907 APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- The Board, in its discretion, may approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships that a physician assistant uses to provide services to patients, the public or the profession and that the other requirements of this section.
- The Board may approve continuing education programs and activities for Category 1 credit that are as follows:
  - (a) Sponsored, co-sponsored, or accredited by:
    - (1) The American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA);
    - (2) The Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME);
    - (3) The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP); or
    - (4) A state medical society; and
  - (b) Designated:
    - (1) Category 1 by the AAPA;
    - (2) American Medical Association Physician's Recognition Award (AMA/PRA) Category 1 by the ACCME; or
    - (3) Prescribed credit by the AAFP.
- 4907.3 The Board may approve continuing education programs and activities for Category 2 credit that are as follows:
  - (a) Limited in content to the following:
    - (1) Public health administration;
    - (2) The basic medical sciences; or
    - (3) The discipline of clinical medicine; and
  - (b) Comprised of one of the following activities:
    - (1) Grand rounds;

- (2) Teaching rounds;
- (3) Seminars;
- (4) Lectures;
- (5) Conferences;
- (6) Medical teaching;
- (7) Patient care review;
- (8) Publication or presentation of an article related to practice as a physician assistant;
- (9) Workshops;
- (10) Courses of instruction, including self-instruction;
- (11) Reading literature published primarily for readership by health care practitioners;
- (12) Teaching health professionals as long as it is not a major professional responsibility of a physician assistant; or
- (13) Written and practical examination, including self-assessment.
- An applicant shall have the burden of verifying whether a program or activity is approved by the Board pursuant to this section prior to attending the program or engaging in the activity.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8266 (December 8, 1989).

#### 4908 - 4910 [RESERVED]

## 4911 SCOPE OF PRACTICE

- A physician assistant may, in accordance with this chapter and the act, perform health care tasks that are consistent with sound medical practice, taking into account the following:
  - (a) The physician assistant's education, skill, training, and experience;
  - (b) The patient's health and safety;
  - (c) The degree of supervision by the supervising physician;

- (d) The qualifications of the supervising physician; and
- (e) The nature of the supervising physician's practice.
- Except as provided in §4911.5, a physician assistant in collaboration with a licensed physician shall perform health care tasks only if the following requirements are met:
  - (a) The health care tasks are authorized by a standard or advanced job description registered by the Board; or
  - (b) The health care tasks are undertaken in immediate collaboration as defined in \$101(2)(c) of the Act, D.C. Code \$2-3301.1(2)(C) (1988) with a supervising physician.
- A standard job description registered by the Board authorizes a physician assistant to perform those health care tasks listed in the job description at a supervising physician's primary location and may include the following:
  - (a) Screening patients to determine the need for medical attention;
  - (b) Taking a patient history;
  - (c) Performing a physical examination;
  - (d) Recording patient data in patient medical records;
  - (e) Performing the following diagnostic, therapeutic, and clinical procedures:
    - (1) Cultures;
    - (2) Venipuncture;
    - Intradermal tests;
    - (4) Electrocardiograms;
    - (5) Pulmonary function tests, excluding endoscopic procedures;
    - (6) Arterial blood gases;
    - (7) Tonemetry screening;
    - (8) Audiometry screening;
    - (9) Visual screening;
    - (10) Catheterization of the bladder;
    - (11) Nasogastric intubation and gastric lavage;
    - (12) Administration of injections, medications, immunizations, and intravenous fluids;

- (13) Strapping, splinting, and casting of sprains and non-displaced fractures;
- (14) Removal of casts;
- (15) Care of superficial wounds, burns, and skin infections, including suturing;
- (16) Application of dressings and bandages;
- (17) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- (18) Removal of impacted cerumen;
- (19) Initiating treatment procedures essential for the life of the patient in emergency circumstances;
- (20) Prescribing and dispensing drugs as specified in §4912; and
- (f) Assisting in patient care and management, as follows:
  - (1) Arranging admissions to a hospital or health care facility under specific orders from a supervising physician;
  - (2) Providing counseling and instruction regarding common patient problems such as nutrition, family planning, exercise, and human development;
  - (3) Attending rounds consistent with the policies of a hospital or health care facility;
  - (4) Referring patients to community resources and health care services; and
  - (5) Assisting in office management by keeping records, ordering supplies and drugs, and maintaining equipment.
- 4911.4 A physician assistant shall obtain authorization in an advanced job description registered by the Board to perform health care tasks that:
  - (a) Are undertaken in a location which is geographically separate from the supervising physician's primary location for seeing patients; or
  - (b) Are not expressly enumerated in §4911.3.
- A physician assistant may perform health care tasks that are authorized by a standard job description before the Board registers the standard job description for a period of sixty (60) days from the date of application if the following occurs:
  - (a) An application to register the standard job description is pending before the Board;
  - (b) The physician assistant is licensed in good standing in the District of Columbia with no pending disciplinary charges and no pending criminal charges in any jurisdiction relating to the physician assistant's fitness to practice;

- (c) The supervising and back-up supervising physicians are licensed in good standing in the District of Columbia with no pending disciplinary charges and no pending criminal charges in any jurisdiction relating to their fitness to practice medicine;
- (d) The health care tasks are performed at the supervising physician's primary location for seeing patients; and
- (e) The health care tasks are performed in accordance with the limitations of this chapter and the act.
- A physician assistant whose application for registration of a standard job description is pending before the Board shall not administer, dispense, or prescribe prescription drugs unless these tasks are undertaken in immediate collaboration with a supervising physician.
- A physician assistant performing health care tasks pursuant ot §4911.5 shall cease to perform health care tasks immediately upon notification from the Board that the Board has decided not to register the standard job description.
- A physician assistant shall wear an identification badge with lettering clearly visible to a patient bearing the name of the physician assistant and the title "Physician Assistant." In addition, a physician assistant shall, upon introduction to a patient and prior to rendering services, explain that the physician assistant is not a physician and that the supervising physician is ultimately responsible for the patient's care.
- A physician assistant may give medical orders to health professionals and personnel consistent with the following:
  - (a) The scope of the physician assistant's registered job description; and
  - (b) The policies of a hospital or health care facility where the orders are to be executed.
- A physician assistant shall not perform health care tasks if a supervising physician is not available to provide supervision in accordance with the general provisions of this chapter and the specific provisions of a registered job description unless the supervising physician has designated a back-up physician to provide substitute supervision pursuant to §4914.6.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8268 (December 8, 1989).

## 4912 PRESCRIBING AND DISPENSING DRUGS

- All prescription orders issued by a physician assistant shall be written on a prescription pad that bears the printed names of the physician assistant and the supervising physician. A physician assistant may sign the prescription order.
- 4912.2 A physician assistant shall not dispense drugs unless they are as follows:
  - (a) Packaged by the manufacturer as a sample; or

- (b) Prepackaged in a unit of use package by a supervising physician.
- 4912.3 All drugs dispensed by a physician assistant shall be labeled to show the following:
  - (a) The name and address of the physician assistant;
  - (b) The name of the supervising physician;
  - (c) The name of the patient;
  - (d) The date dispensed;
  - (e) The name and strength of the drug;
  - (f) Directions for use;
  - (g) Cautionary statements, if appropriate;
  - (h) The lot and control number; and
  - (i) The expiration date of the drug.
- A physician assistant shall not dispense a drug from any source other than a supervising physician or a pharmacist acting on a written order of a supervising physician.
- 4912.5 A physician assistant who administers, dispenses, or prescribes a prescription drug shall enter a progress note in the patient's chart on the date of the transaction which shall include the following information:
  - (a) Each prescription that a physician assistant orders; and
  - (b) The name, strength, and quantity of each drug that a physician assistant dispenses or administers.
- 4912.6 A physician assistant shall not dispense or prescribe controlled substances, except that a physician assistant may advise a patient of the availability of over-the-counter drugs that are listed in Schedule V.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8271 (December 8, 1989).

#### 4913 [RESERVED]

#### 4914 SUPERVISING PHYSICIAN

A supervising physician has ultimate responsibility for the medical care and treatment given to a patient by a physician assistant to whom the supervising physician has delegated authority to perform health care tasks.

- Subject to the limitations of the Act and this chapter, a physician who is registered as a supervising physician by the Board may delegate to a physician assistant medical procedures and other tasks that are usually performed within the normal scope of the supervising physician's practice.
- A supervising physician shall not permit a physician assistant to practice medicine independently, and shall ensure that all actions undertaken by a physician assistant are as follows:
  - (a) Governed by a standard or advanced job description registered by the Board;
  - (b) Performed in immediate collaboration with the supervising physician; or
  - (c) Performed pursuant to §4911.5.
- A supervising physician may delegate to a physician assistant only those tasks and duties that are consistent with sound medical practice, taking into account the following:
  - (a) The physician assistant's education, skill, training, and experience;
  - (b) The patient's health and safety;
  - (c) The degree of supervision provided by the supervising physician;
  - (d) The qualifications of the supervising physician; and
  - (e) The nature of the supervising physician's practice.
- A supervising physician shall be responsible for supervising a physician assistant at all times that a physician assistant performs health care tasks delegated by a supervising physician. Unless a job description registered by the Board expressly requires a greater level of supervision, a supervising physician shall do the following:
  - (a) Be present within a fifteen (15) mile radius of the District;
  - (b) Be available for consultation by voice communication;
  - (c) Countersign all medical orders and progress notes within forty-eight (48) hours; and
  - (d) Provide immediate collaboration for health care tasks that are not governed by a job description registered by the Board.
- 4914.6 A supervising physician who is temporarily unavailable to supervise a physician assistant shall designate a back-up supervising physician to provide substitute supervision during the supervising physician's absence.
- 4914.7 A physician who is designated to provide substitute supervision of a physician assistant pursuant to a \$4914.6 shall be registered in a job description as a back-up supervising physician before providing supervision.

- A back-up supervising physician shall have ultimate responsibility for the medical care and treatment given to a patient by a physician assistant acting under the supervision of the back-up supervising physician.
- The Director may amend a registered job description to name additional back-up supervising physicians; Provided, that each named physician is licensed in good standing in the District and, on a form approved by the Board, certifies as follows:
  - (a) That the physician has read and understood the contents of the job description, this chapter, and the Act; and
  - (b) That the physician agrees to observe the requirements for supervising the practice of a physician assistant set forth in those documents.
- 4914.10 A supervising physician shall not delegate patient care responsibility to a physician assistant during the absence of the supervising physician unless substitute supervision has been arranged.
- A health care facility, organization, association, institution, or group practice which employs a physician assistant shall designate one physician to supervise the physician assistant. The physician who is designated has ultimate responsibility for the care and treatment of a patient attended by the physician assistant regardless of whether the designated supervising physician actually pays the salary of the physician assistant.
- Except as provided in §4914.13, a physician shall not supervise more than two (2) physician assistants at one time.
- A supervising physician employed by a health care facility that provides in-patient treatment may supervise four (4) physician assistants; Provided, that the health care tasks delegated to the physician assistants are restricted to the case and treatment of the facility's in-patient population.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8272 (December 8, 1989).

#### 4915 REGISTRATION OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

- 4915.1 A physician assistant shall apply to the Board for registration of a standard job description by submitting the following documents:
  - (a) A written job description meeting the requirements of §4915.3;
  - (b) Evidence that the physician assistant holds a license in the District in good standing; and
  - (c) Evidence that the supervising physician and back-up supervising physicians hold licenses in the District in good standing.
- 4915.2 A physician essistant shall apply to the Board for registration of an advanced job description by submitting the following documents:
  - (a) A written job description meeting the requirements of §4915.4; and

- (b) Evidence that the physician assistant holds or has applied for a registered standard job description in accordance with §4915.1 to perform health care tasks in collaboration with the supervising physician.
- 4915.3 A standard job description shall contain the following:
  - (a) A description of the supervising physician's customary practice;
  - (b) The address of the primary location where the supervising physician sees patients;
  - (c) The hospitals where the supervising physician has privileges;
  - (d) Names, addresses, and license numbers of the physician assistant, the supervising physician, the back-up supervising physicians, and any other physician assistants whom the supervising physician supervises;
  - (e) A list of the standard health care tasks that the physician assistant is authorized to perform:
  - (f) Certification by the physician assistant as follows:
    - (1) That the physician assistant has read and understood the contents of the standard job description, this chapter, and the Act; and
    - (2) That the physician assistant agrees to observe the requirements for practice as a physician assistant set forth in those documents; and
  - (g) Certifications by the supervising physician and back-up supervising physicians as follows:
    - (1) That they have read and understood the contents of the standard job description, this chapter, and the Act; and
    - (2) That they agree to observe the requirements for supervising the practice of a physician assistant set forth in those documents.
- 4915.4 An advanced job description shall contain the following:
  - (a) Names, addresses, and license numbers of the physician assistant, the supervising physician, and the back-up supervising physicians;
  - (b) A complete description of the health care tasks to be delegated to the physician assistant;
  - (c) The location where each health care task will be performed;
  - (d) A description of the supervision that the supervising physician will give the physician assistant for each health care task that is listed;
  - (e) A description of the qualifications of the physician assistant that enable the physician assistant to perform each health care task that is listed;

- (f) A description of the practice and qualifications of the supervising physician that enable the supervising physician to supervise the physician assistant to perform each health care task that is listed;
- (g) A description of the practice and qualifications of each back-up supervising physician that enable the back-up supervising physician to supervise the physician assistant to perform each health care task that is listed;
- (h) Certification by the physician assistant as follows:
  - (1) That the physician assistant has read and understood the contents of the advanced job description, this chapter, and the Act; and
  - (2) That the physician assistant agrees to observe the requirements for practice as a physician assistant set forth in those documents; and
- (i) Certifications by the supervising physician and back-up supervising physicians as follows:
  - (1) That they have read and understood the contents of the advanced job description, this chapter, and the Act;
  - (2) That they agree to observe the requirements for supervising the practice of a physician assistant set forth in those documents.
- The Board shall act upon an application to register a standard job description within sixty (60) days of its receipt by the Board.
- The Board shall act upon an application to register an advanced job description within a reasonable time of its receipt by the Board taking into account such factors as the number and complexity of the health care tasks that are listed in the job description.
- The Board shall register a job description that is consistent with sound medical practice. In making its determination the Board shall take into account the following factors:
  - (a) The complexity of the health care tasks;
  - (b) The degree of risk involved in the performance of the health care task including the availability of resources in case of an emergency;
  - (c) The skill, education, training, and experience of the physician assistant;
  - (d) The degree of supervision to be provided by the supervising physician;
  - (e) The qualifications of the supervising physician; and
  - (f) The nature of the supervising physician's practice.
- 4915.8 The Board may modify a job description to make it consistent with sound medical practice prior to approving it for registration.

- 4915.9 Upon the Board's approval of a job description for registration, the Director shall assign the job description a registration number and shall issue matching job description registration numbers to the physician assistant and the supervising physician together with copies of the job description as approved by the Board.
- 4915.10 Except as provided in §§4915.11 and 4915.12, a job description registration is valid for three (3) years.
- A job registration ceases to be valid if the license of either the supervising physician or the physician assistant ceases to be in full force or effect unless the Board in writing directs otherwise.
- 4915.12 A job description registration expires automatically upon termination of the employment of a physician assistant. However, termination of employment of a physician assistant does not cause a physician assistant's license to expire.
- A supervising physician shall notify the Board when a physician assistant terminates or is terminated from employment within thirty (30) days of the termination.
- A physician assistant shall apply to the Board for an amendment to a registered job description prior to undertaking a change in health care tasks. An amendment to a job description approved by the Board is valid for the remainder of the job description registration period.
- The Board shall notify a physician assistant at the address shown on the Board's records for the physician assistant that it is time to renew the registration of a job description.
- A physician assistant's failure to receive notice to renew the registration does not relieve the physician assistant of responsibility to renew a job description registration.
- 4915.17 The Board shall maintain the following records regarding physician assistants which shall be available for public inspection:
  - (a) A registry of physicians assistants;
  - (b) A registry of supervising physicians; and
  - (c) A copy of each registered job description.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8275 (December 8, 1989).

# 4916 DUTIES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

- The Committee shall advise the Board on all matters pertaining to this chapter.
- The Committee shall review all applications for a license to practice as a physician assistant and make recommendations to the Board.
- The Committee shall review all applications for registration of a job description and make recommendations to the Board.

4916.4 The Committee shall review complaints regarding physician assistants referred by the Board and make recommendations to the Board regarding what action should be taken.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8279 (December 8, 1989).

#### 4999 DEFINITIONS

4999.1 As used in this chapter the following terms have the meanings ascribed:

Administer - to give e prescription drug by injection, inhalation, ingestion or other means of direct application to the body of a patient.

Board - the Board of Medicine, established by \$203(a) of the Act, D.C. Code \$2-3302(a) (1988).

Committee - the Advisory Committee on Physician Assistants, established by §203(d) of the Act. D.C. Code §2-3302(d) (1988).

Controlled substance - a drug defined as a controlled substance in one of the following acts or rules promulgated pursuant thereto:

- (a) The Federal Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, 21 U.S.C. §801 et seq.; or
- (b) The District of Columbia Uniform Controlled Substances Act of 1981, D.C. Code §33-501 et seq. (1981).

Dispense - to distribute a prescription durg to a patient or the patient's agent including the prescribing, packaging, labeling, and compounding necessary to prepare the prescription drug for distribution.

Job description registration - a registration issued to a physician assistant and a supervising physician signifying that the Board has approved a physician assistant to perform health care tasks in accordance with the terms of a written job description registered by the Board.

Physician - a person licensed to practice medicine under the Act, including an osteopath.

Physician assistant - a person licensed to practice as a physician assistant under the Act.

Prescription drug - one of the following drugs:

- (a) A drug which under federal law is required, prior to being dispensed or delivered, to be labeled in substance with either of the following statements:
  - (1) "Caution: Federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription"; or
  - (2) "Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian";

- (b) A drug that is required by any applicable federal or District law or regulation to be dispensed on prescription only; or
- (c) A drug that is restricted to use by health and allied practitioners for research.

Primary location for seeing patients - a location where a supervising physician sees patients, on a full-time, regular basis, including hospitals in the District of Columbia where a supervising physician has privileges.

Supervising physician - a physician who supervises a physician assistant under the terms of a written job description registered by the Board.

The definitions in §4099 of chapter 40 of thie title and the Act are incorporated by reference into and are applicable to this chapter.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 36 DCR 8263, 8279 (December 8, 1989).